# Indiana Code of Ethical Practices and Procedures

**Prepared by the Indiana Department of Education and
The Ethical Testing Practices Committee with assistance from
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**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to give Indiana school personnel a code of procedures and activities that are appropriate and expected parts of a testing program. The topics discussed include test security, pre-test activities, testing conditions, and post-test activities.

This code reflects general ethical principles and standards as presented in various documents and position statements sponsored by a number of organizations including the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, the Association for Assessment in Counseling, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

The code is generally applicable to all systematic assessment programs, including traditional standardized multiple-choice tests and those using alternative procedures such as performance assessment.

The code is not intended to apply to assessments given by teachers for classroom use (whether those assessments are teacher-made, obtained from texts, published, standardized, or are Indiana statewide classroom assessment tools).

**Test Security**

It is essential that all test materials remain secure. All administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents are responsible for test security.

Corporation test coordinators direct the management of the testing program and have a responsibility to do the following:

- inventory and track materials
- securely store tests before distribution to test sites and after their return control distribution to and from test sites
- control the storage, distribution, administration, and collection of tests
- ensure that no tests are copied

School personnel at the building site have a responsibility to do the following:

- code the tests prior to testing

- inventory and track materials
- securely store tests before and after testing sessions
- control distribution within the building
- ensure that no tests are photocopied
- ensure that students do not copy any materials
- ensure that students use only those reference materials allowed by the testing procedures
- ensure that students do not receive copies of the test ahead of time
- ensure that students do not learn of specific test items prior to the test
- ensure that students do not exchange information during testing except when the procedures so specify
- ensure that answer documents are not altered after testing

Test security is the responsibility of the entire school community. Breaches of test security are first addressed by the building principal. Unresolved issues are subsequently referred to the test coordinator and the school corporation superintendent.


## Pre-test Activities

The most significant consideration in pre-test activities, apart from security issues, relates to how valid the assessment scores will be as estimates of student achievement in the domains being assessed. The test should not determine the specifics of what is to be taught; rather, it should measure a reasonable sample of what the curriculum specifies the students should be taught. The following five points address basic considerations regarding the match between what is taught and what is assessed, as well as other issues related to pre-test activities.  In addition, appended to this code are expanded descriptions of the issues of test-curriculum match and their appropriate resolution. (See Appendices A  and B.)

*1   Test Curriculum Match*

The assessments should have a reasonably close relationship to what is being taught to students; i.e., there should be a good test-curriculum match. In Indiana, the basic curriculum to which assessments are matched is defined by the Indiana Essential Skills in the various content domains. This means that those who develop or select the assessments should ensure that the assessments represent a reasonable sample of the Indiana Essential Skills.

Meeting this standard of a test-curriculum match is above all the responsibility of the administrators or other authorities sponsoring the assessment. For Indiana statewide assessments, the sponsors are the State Board of Education and the Indiana Department of Education. These sponsors should specify what it is they are assessing (e.g., reading capabilities) and ensure that the items and tasks in the assessment do sample those domains as they are defined in the Indiana Essential Skills.

The sponsors should do what they can to ensure consistency between the assessment schedule and the schedule of the instructional program as planned and implemented by the curriculum planners, the district and building administrators, and the teachers. In brief, coordination and communication are essential.

Failure to match assessments and curriculum will usually lead to results that are subject to misinterpretation, and that will have negative consequences for students, teachers, and the instructional program.

## 2   Classroom Instruction and the Test

Students should be given instruction, experience, and practice in the Essential Skills domains that the assessments will sample. This does not mean, however, that the curriculum should be narrowed to fit the assessment, and it especially does not mean that teachers should be pressured to focus on those subsets of essential skills that are expected to be included in an upcoming assessment. Such pressure and such action by teachers may be considered unethical behavior.

## 3   Practicing Test-Taking Skills

Teachers should give students practice with various item formats of assessments they will be taking, but only enough practice to ensure that the assessment will measure the students'  knowledge and understanding and not their test-taking skills. One or two brief sessions of practice with items or tasks similar to those likely to appear on the test would be appropriate. However, spending any substantial time on such practice is counter-productive and should be avoided.

Since the goal of teaching is to increase learning rather than to increase test scores,

student attention and effort should be directed to learning the Essential Skills. Teachers should engage students in the types of activities that represent the Essential Skills, such as writing and reading extensively and applying mathematical processes and reasoning to solving problems.

School personnel should not buy, develop, or promote the use of any extensive test practice materials that closely parallel assessment items or tasks.

Students should not be given practice on items or tasks known to be part of the assessment.

### 4   Reasonable Notice to Those Taking the Test

Reasonable notice of upcoming assessments should be provided to all concerned, including teachers, students, and parents. However, using this notice to get probable low-scoring students not to participate, thereby raising aggregate scores, can be considered unethical behavior.

### 5   Preparing for the Test

The test coordinator and responsible building personnel should make appropriate arrangements, including provision for adequate facilities, materials, and training of test administrators and proctors. Test administrators must study the appropriate administrative manual prior to administering the test.

Any needed modifications of testing conditions must be planned for in advance.

## Testing Conditions

### 1   Testing Procedures

Test administrators must follow the procedures in the manuals, including procedures referring to testing conditions, timing, and instructions.

Failure to follow the specified procedures will invalidate the results.

Students with special needs might require variations in the testing conditions. Test administrators must make a record of any students for whom testing conditions are

modified.

## *2 Testing in the Classroom*

Test administrators must provide the necessary chairs, desks, lighting, and so forth, to allow students to do their best work. All school personnel involved in administering the test must assume responsibility for the quality of testing conditions.

## *3 Testing Materials*

Test administrators must provide complete sets of materials for all students, including booklets, answer sheets, pencils, and other materials such as rulers, calculators, scratch paper, manipulatives, and experimental materials as required. This condition must be met before students begin the test.

## *4 Directions*

When reading directions aloud, test administrators must ensure that all students understand what is expected of them on the test and that students have the opportunity to ask questions as needed. Examiners and proctors must not answer questions about specific test items, but they may repeat initial instructions about item format, scoring rules, and timing.

## *5 Monitoring*

Test administrators must monitor the testing session to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed. It is not acceptable for test administrators to leave the room, to read, or to ignore what is happening.

All proctors should be trained to understand the testing procedures and their responsibilities as proctors.
Test administrators and proctors must ensure that all students:

- follow instructions
- respond in the appropriate places in answer documents
- do not exchange answers unless that is part of the procedure
- do not interfere with or distract others
- use only permitted materials and devices

**Post-test Activities**

*1   Collecting Test Materials and Completing Reports*

When testing has concluded, test administrators will collect and check all materials and follow test security procedures.

Test administrators will account for all materials and deliver them to the test coordinator.

Test administrators will write a report of all incidents and events that might invalidate any scores, including disruptions, illness, and possible cheating.

The test coordinator will account for all materials from all test sites.

*2   Use of Information*

Strict confidentiality of individual student scores will be maintained.

Individual scores will be available to authorized personnel, parents, legal guardians, and students only. Appropriate interpretative guides will be provided with all test scores.  Scores will be interpreted in context using all relevant data.